

## Local help for polar bears

By Tony Davis

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The federal listing of the polar bear as threatened stands as one of the biggest legal victories for the Tucson group that first sought the bear's protection.

But more lawsuits lie ahead if the Center for Biological Diversity is going to win its effort to use the Endangered Species Act to focus the world's attention on global warming and to bring new legal standards to the climate-change issue.

The Tucson-based center petitioned for the bear listing in 2005 and has since been joined by the Natural Resources Defense Council and Greenpeace.

Though the Interior Department agreed Wednesday with many scientists that global warming is reducing the bear's habitat, it said it would be inappropriate to use the bear's listing as a way to reduce greenhouse gases.

"Their attempts to list the polar bear and then undermine it will be completely futile," said Tucsonan Kieran Suckling, the center's director.

"They won't hold up in court for 10 seconds. This is really a lame-duck administration huffing and puffing. . . . The listing of the polar bear opened the barn doors of global warming wide, and there is no closing them."

Other past victories by the center include a ban on logging in the Southwest and removal of cattle from 3 million acres of federal land in the Southwest.

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